



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC TO HOLD HEARING ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO COLD WEATHER RULE

Jefferson City (July 2, 2004)---The Missouri Public Service Commission will hold a hearing on **July 9, 2004**, to receive comments regarding proposed changes to the Commission's Cold Weather Rule.

The hearing is scheduled to begin at 10:00 am in Room 310 of the Governor Office Building, 200 Madison Street, Jefferson City.

Established in 1977, the Cold Weather Rule has helped more than 2 million needy Missourians maintain heat-related service during the winter. The current rule allows customers to maintain service under certain payment terms, restricts deposits, ensures customers are given adequate notification of a proposed discontinuance, encourages customers who can't pay their utility bills to seek financial assistance through available sources, provides special provisions for the state's elderly and handicapped and prohibits the disconnection of heat-related service when temperatures are predicted to fall below 30 degrees.

In March, the Public Service Commission opened a case and created a task force to examine possible programs for improving long term energy affordability for those in need of assistance and to propose any immediate changes to the Commission's Cold Weather Rule that may provide short term help.

The Commission's order establishing the case and creating a task force noted: "While the Commission continues to closely monitor the Cold Weather Rule and its affect on Missouri consumers, the Commission has not substantially changed the provisions of the rule, on a permanent basis, since 1993. Given these facts, the Commission believes it is imperative that the rule be closely examined again to determine if it continues to adequately address consumer needs."

Since its creation, the task force has held several working meetings and held a number of local public hearings across the state to receive customer input.

It is anticipated that any changes to the current Cold Weather Rule will be in place when the Cold Weather Rule period begins on November 1st.